Press release | 01.07.2016

Air pollution

Deal on draft EU law a blow for public health

An agreement between the European Parliament and Council revising EU air quality legislation, setting out national limits on a range of air pollutants, was today confirmed (1). The Greens condemned the final agreement, which significantly weakens the draft legislation proposed by the European Commission. Commenting on the vote, Green environment and health spokesperson **Bas Eickhout** said:

"This is a bad deal for the European public and for all those who suffer health problems due to poor air quality in Europe. The final agreement substantially weakens the draft law proposed by the Commission and is behind the position voted by the European Parliament on air pollutant limits.

"Instead of learning from the problems enforcing EU air quality laws in the past and seeking to truly tackle health-damaging air pollutants, the final agreement includes various loopholes that will allow EU member states to shirk their responsibility. 'Flexibilities' in the law will allow member states to cook their books and adjust their national emissions inventories if there are worse than expected results of policy actions, like on diesel emissions. This adds insult to the loopholes already included in EU rules on car pollutant emissions.

"The big farming lobby successfully lobbied for far weaker limits on ammonia and succeeded in excluding methane entirely from the scope of the law. The sector has been let off the hook in spite of research showing agricultural pollutants are the number one cause of air pollution, even in urban areas.

"With air pollution leading to up to 450,000 premature deaths in the EU each year, and the number continuing to grow, it is clear that we need tougher regulation to tackle the problem. Instead, EU governments have copped out. As the dieselgate scandal has already demonstrated, there is a total unwillingness to address the problem of air pollution among many EU governments and a narrow national approach, despite the clearly cross-border nature of the problem."

(1) The agreement concluded the revision of the National Emission Ceilings Directive, which prolongs the existing legislation setting pollutant limits for EU member states until 2030.

Recommended

Opinion

© Christian Kaufmann

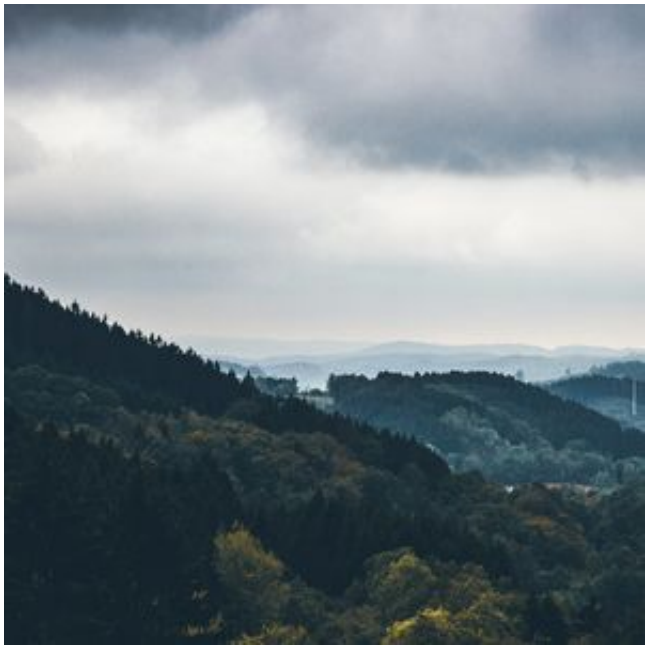


Healthy food starts with healthy farming. Europe must …

04.11.2026

Press release

sebastian-johann



Commission launching an attack against nature

04.11.2026

Press release

Image by joakant from Pixabay



The World must triple efforts to save nature

29.10.2026

Press release



Conservatives and Social Democrats Put Jobs at Risk

22.10.2026

Responsible MEPs

Please share

- E-Mail